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A MAGAZINE FOR SHEFFIELD. ISSUE 60. FREE.

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MANAGEMENT. JAMES LOCK.
EDITOR. SAM WALBY.
DESIGN & LAYOUT. FEEDBACKER DESIGN.
ADVERTISING. BEN JACKSON.
JAMES LOCK.
ADMIN & FINANCE. SARA HILL.
PROOF & COPY. SAM WALBY.
FELICITY HEIDEN.
IAN PENNINGTON.
AD DESIGN. FEEDBACKER DESIGN.
DISTRIBUTION. OPUS DISTRO.
CONTRIBUTORS. ALT-SHEFF.
JASON LEMAN.
GEOFF MACKAY.
MAX EVERETT.
CHELLA QUINT.
CASSIE KILL.
HELEN MORT.
ALAN BUCKLEY.
SARAH THOMASIN.
NEWTSHUMP.
SAM WALBY.
TOM BELSHAW.
PAUL ROBSON.
ROB ALDAM.
TASHA FRANEK.
CHRIS ARNOLD.
BEN DOREY.
FRED OXBY.
GORDON BARKER.
BEN GOULDER.
JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES.
JOSH SENIOR.

NOW THEN IS A FREE MAGAZINE FOR PEOPLE IN SHEFFIELD.

We aim to cultivate choice, voice and responsibility by providing a platform for independent art, trade, music, writing and local news. We support Sheffield's economy by only working with independent traders, community groups, charities and local government.

Almost all articles published in this magazine are written by members of the community, not professionals. If you don't like what you read or have something that needs to be said, get in touch. Your opinions make Now Then what it is.

WRITER? MUSICIAN? ARTIST?
SAM@NOWTHENMAGAZINE.COM

POET?
JOE@NOWTHENMAGAZINE.COM

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Enjoy the read.



Evolutionprint



EDITORIAL.

Greetings and welcome to our 60th issue. Next month will be our fifth birthday, so stay tuned for something rather big, but that doesn't mean we've put all of our eggs in one proverbial basket. This month's mag features art from the fantastic Handiedan, a collage artist born, bred and based in The Netherlands. We're all big fans of her work, and it's great to feature art that is so different to anything we have covered so far. Read our interview with her for an insight into her working techniques.

Recommended read this month goes to Jason Leman's article on the proposed Bedroom Tax. We also have an interview with Wolverhampton-based musical duo Letherette, a special Localcheck piece on high speed rail, our second printed installation of Dead Space, poetry curated by award-winning local poet Helen Mort, and a piece by Tom Belshaw about musical progression throughout the ages.

If you want to get in touch, email me on sam@nowthenmagazine.com.

SAM.

NOW THEN 60, MARCH 2012. WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS.

5 // LOCALCHECK.
HS2.

7 // DEAD SPACE.
Lost Post – The Old Central Post Office.

9 // BEDROOM TAX.
A government under-occupied.

11 // 1913.
A year that influenced everything.

13 // FOOD.
Japanese.

16 // WORD LIFE.
Alan Buckley / Sarah Thomasin.

19 // NEWSTHUMP.
Giving the news a good hiding.

22 // HANDIEDAN.
Dutch collage artist talks about her art.

33 // SOUND.
Progression.

34 // LIVE.
Tom, Nick and Lenny 3 / Villagers / Michael J Tinker / Listings.

36 // ALBUMS.
Dead Sons / Louville / PVT / Hookworms.

38 // LETHERETTE.
Wolverhampton duo talk innocent pleasures.

42 // FILMREEL.
Dramatic Veracity vs Factual Accuracy.

44 // FAVOURITES.
Our pick of the bunch.



LOCAL CHECK.

HS2.
HOSTED BY ALT-SHEFF.

I really support public transport, but the proposed HS2 high speed rail plan has so many weak links that it's strange the three mainstream parties are all in favour.

Phase one, London to Birmingham, faced a series of legal claims that the government failed in environmental assessment and public consultation. Then, even before the verdict was returned, phase two was made public – a year early. It's being rail-roaded through, so what's the rush? The Channel Tunnel took 192 years from suggestion to completion. HS2 is an idea barely five years old.

It would snake through South Yorkshire, crossing the River Rother three times, running through flood plains and across existing railway lines. Of course, train lines don't kill environments, motorways do, but 350 unique habitats are threatened, including locally the Woodhouse Washlands reserve. No wonder Sheffield Wildlife Trust is pulling the alarm cord.

Sheffield's station will be at Meadowhall. That may explain the many recently proposed transport improvements between there and Sheffield, and land-holding tactics around the shopping centre. When construction corporation Amey chose that area as a marshalling yard for the PFI roads contract, did it have any idea? The Passenger Transport Executives Group and business leaders are in favour. Were they also in the know? Wheels within wheels...

The arguments of pressure group Stop HS2 stack up, not least on costs. Can we afford £33 billion, the country's largest ever infrastructure investment? Oddly HS2 isn't required to financially break-even. South Yorkshire's once-proud public transport system was killed off by Conservatives opposing public subsidy on principle. Could it be that prestigious 'high-profile' transport systems are OK for subsidies like, say, Concorde?

Will HS2 revive the economy and reverse the north-south divide? Even if the government really does mind the gap, this project won't. It's designed from – and for – London, funnelling in commuters. Any jobs created could be fewer than those lost in the north-south imbalance, and largely London-based. Mega cities grow parasitically until their hinterland cannot support them. Exploitation-level housing costs have strangled the supply of cheap labour. One hour's commute is seen as acceptable, so magically various northern cities will soon be within about an hour's reach. Is anyone going to live in the capital and work up here? No chance. Why would they? The same scenario has played out in other countries with one dominant metropolis.

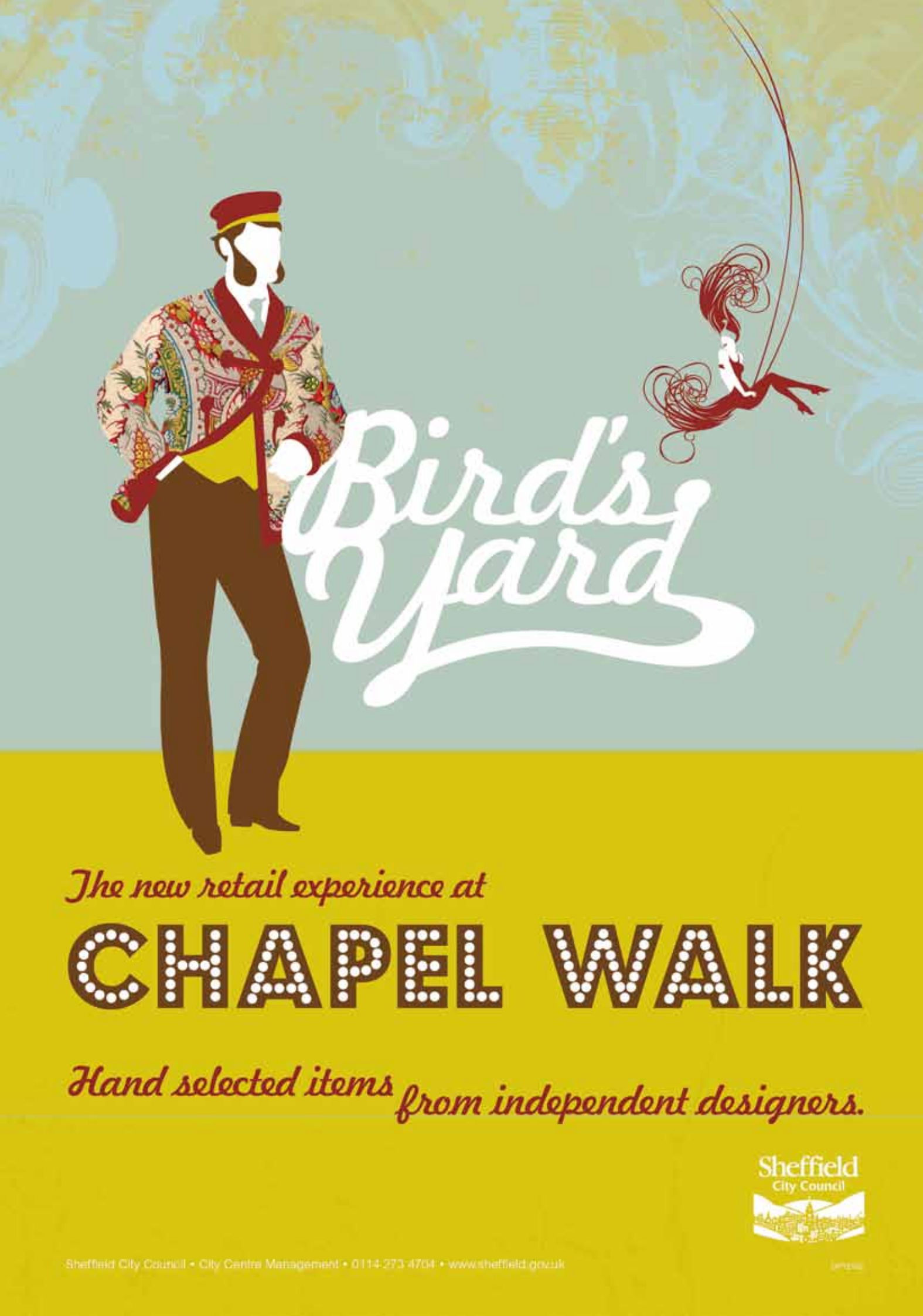
Arguing that rail use is reaching the limits of the network ignores the Department for Transport's proposal to upgrade existing lines at a fraction of the cost. Will frequent flyers transfer to rail? Maybe. Domestic air travel is stagnant, but it could fight back by cross-subsidising from long-haul revenues. Competition's a dirty business. Nothing's predictable, and other fast train services have failed to live up to forecasts, but if HS2 is popular it could threaten services on other lines. Even the project's carbon reduction claims are seen as hot air by some experts, unless renewable energy produces the electricity. Don't hold your breath.

We live in a little country, in a digital world. Do we need to travel twice as fast in the same direction? No, but HS2 has the inevitable feel of a slow train coming. Powerful organisations support it, including our own council, while inclusion in the EU's Trans-European Transport Network Policy carries a lot of weight.

Rail route planning must be hell. Every option will upset someone. In the end, as silly as it sounds, do Y-shaped routes generally tend to succeed? Look at Supertram, or the Channel Tunnel terminals. HS2 would be a “Y” linking London, Leeds and Manchester. It's almost as if, with various proposed routes, someone says “Let's move beyond why, and get on to how.” This gets reported as moving beyond “Y” and so a decision is made.

But seriously, the only certainty is that housing costs around the stations will rise. Half a million for a house in Wincobank? Buy now while prices are low.

stopHS2.org
alt-sheff.org



DEAD SPACE.

LOST POST – THE OLD CENTRAL POST OFFICE.
GEOFF MACKAY & MAX EVERETT.

How much do we take notice of the environment around our city centre? Why are decent buildings sitting empty? This month the focus of Dead Space moves back to the city centre. The buildings in question are another clear representation of quality spaces in Sheffield that are currently vacant and serve no purpose. Fitzalan Square and the former post office buildings make up the subject of this article.

Fitzalan Square has been a vibrant constituent of Sheffield city centre for over 100 years. As part of Sheffield's inner core, Fitzalan Square has always provided the link between the markets and High Street. The broad history of the square records its creation in 1881, although the site itself has been in use since the medieval period. The name is derived from the Fitzalan family, who owned the main market hall which stood there from 1786 to 1930. The square has changed a lot since its creation but the statue of Edward VII and the post office buildings have been there for over a century.

The Grade II listed complex includes three buildings that were used as the central office and sorting buildings for the postal service in Sheffield until 1999. The earliest building is still in use as a branch of Yorkshire Bank, while the other two buildings on the square are the dead spaces in the trio. The main building and the sorting office functioned as postal buildings for about 90 years before they were converted into office space and eventually sold in 2006. The Edwardian style of the vacant structures provides an excellent example of architectural trends during Sheffield's earlier periods of industrial and economic expansion.

The main structure, designed by Walter Pott and completed in 1910, contains a lot of classic detail. Clad with granite and finely cut stonework, the building dominates Fitzalan Square, its domed corner tower uniting its two wings. Internally the building contains marble panelling and a stunning spiral staircase that includes an ornate wrought-iron balustrade. The Henry Tanner-designed former sorting office on Pond Street, completed in 1871, also has some interesting bits of architecture, like the striking use of brick ashlar stone adornments and the arches that sit above its large windows.

The individual merits of both buildings combine to reinforce the cultural and economic value of the site, not just to developers but also to the public of today and the future. We hope the eventual conclusion of the redevelopment of these buildings addresses these realities, but for now the buildings sit in limbo.

The site has a long history of communication, and the buildings should be used in a way that reflects this. This area of town is due for considerable change over the next few years, with the relocation of the markets to the Moor and the potential of opening up the Castle ruins for public viewing. But let's face it, when will all this actually happen? How many building projects have come to a halt? Where does this leave Castle Market and the surrounding area in the near future?

Fitzalan Square is one of the busiest squares in the city due to its proximity to the bus and train stations. With this in mind, we envisage a scheme that differs from the questionable current proposals for the site. Instead of housing unaffordable apartments, out-of-place wine bars and restaurants that eat at your pocket, wouldn't we all like to see an interesting and unique attraction?

Our alternative concept would be a hive of social activity; a cheap place to stay, a place to eat, a place to communicate and learn something, a place to meet and a place to buy local art and produce. Sheffield doesn't have anything like a youth hostel. For travellers this means staying in some mediocre hotel where nothing happens. Part of the development would house a hostel, ideal for people arriving in Sheffield who want to get around the city, and those using the Ponds Forge sporting facilities.

As well as a hostel, a small museum exploring the history of postal communication could be included along with an internet cafe. The grand, rotund corner on the square could be used as an entrance to a retail experience to rival that of the Corn Exchange in Leeds. The space would be for small independent shops and stalls to generate growth and create a unique attraction.

While the future of buildings like these remains unknown, groups like The Meanwhile Project encourage the use of empty properties that blemish town centres, devastate economic and social value, and waste resources that cannot be left idle.

If you have any interesting photos, stories or experiences about the post office, please let us know – everettmackay.co.uk/contact-us

meanwhile.org.uk

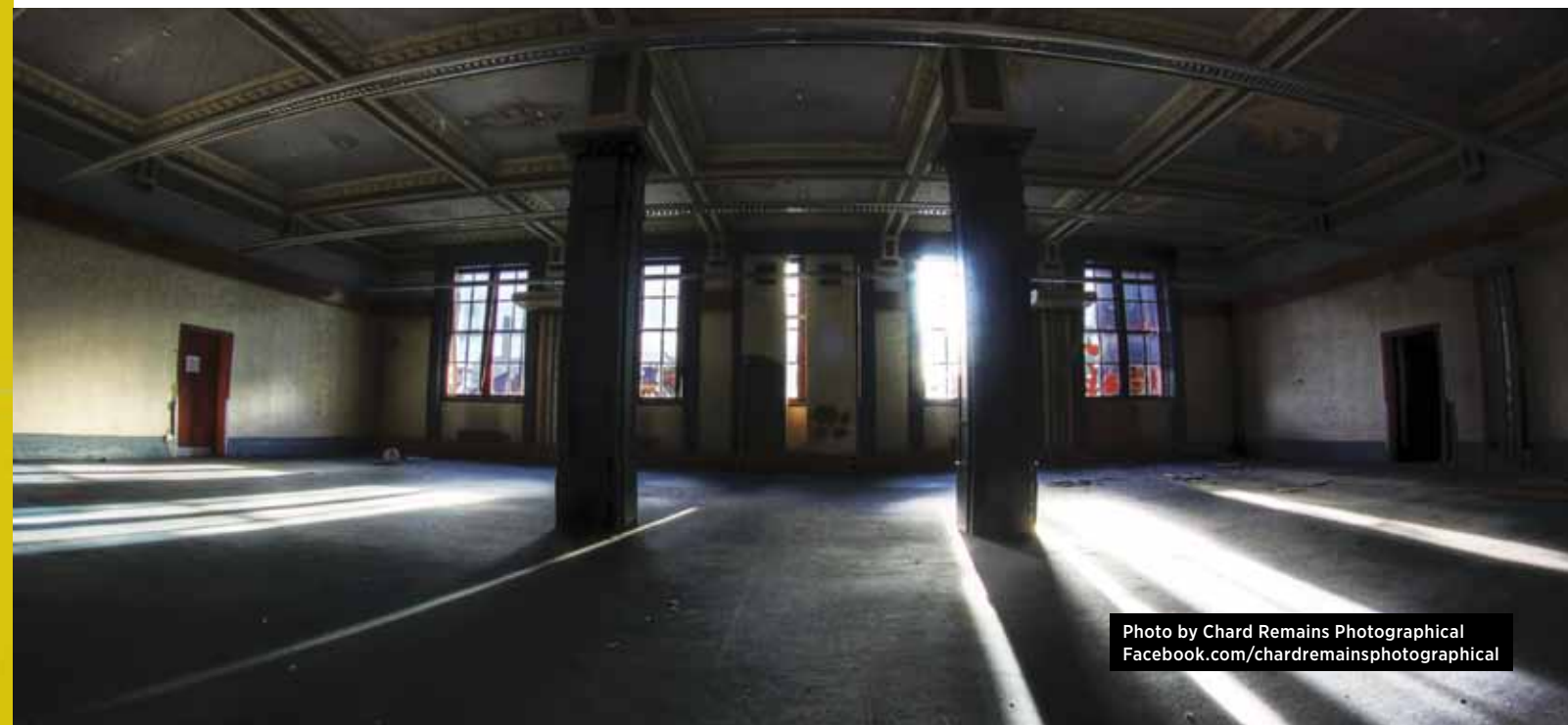


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[Facebook.com/chardremainsphotographical](https://www.facebook.com/chardremainsphotographical)



BEDROOM TAX.

A GOVERNMENT UNDER-OCCUPIED.
JASON LEMAN.

Hello. As MP for Bollinger on the Mange I have noticed a lot of misunderstanding of late from the more unfortunate amongst us, such as those suffering from a lack of comprehensive education about the “size criteria” of “bedroom tax”. Let me set a few things straight.

The bedroom tax will cut housing benefit for people who are living in social housing too big for their needs. For example, 15-year-old Tommy might be in one room and four-year-old brother Jonny in another. That counts as “under occupying”. Mum and dad will have to move house and Tommy and Jonny will have to share rooms, or they’ll get a 14% cut in housing benefit. If two rooms are under-occupied then mum and dad get a 25% cut. But what could be nicer than Tommy and Jonny bunking up together? There are regulations on “statutory overcrowding”, so if the rooms are less than 90 square feet, mum and dad could legally challenge their landlord or the local authority. Their landlord could also reclassify the number of bedrooms so they could avoid the tax. But we don’t like things like that so please don’t bother.

In Sheffield, at least 6,000 households are going to be hit by the tax. Pensioners are exempt, unless they do something silly like work. Everyone else is included. Around half of you will need to go into the lovely private sector, where the bedroom tax doesn’t apply. Once in the private rented sector, you’ll find it is more expensive so you’ll get lots more housing benefit. This might mean the Government won’t save a penny through the bedroom tax, but the private sector will benefit and that is always a good thing, right?

There have been a few moans about different bits of the bedroom tax. Let me lay these concerns to rest with a few suggestions:

Foster children are not counted towards your allotted number of bedrooms. Just keep them under the stairs like Harry Potter. It didn’t do him any harm, did it?

Disabled children or spouses needing their own room are counted as under-occupying.

A bedroom empty for more than 13 weeks a year is counted as unoccupied – for example, if your child is at university or in the armed forces. Children of all ages love adventure so have them ‘camp’ in the front room of your new downsized bedsit. Little

Jonny coming back from Afghanistan will feel like he never left the front!

Of course, if any of this applies to you, Sheffield Council has the ability to award Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to support people in need. This is very important. Please do apply. Every time some ghastly interviewer starts having a go at us for some hard luck case we have to point out that your Council is entirely to blame. We gave them the money for one out of 16 people to get support, although five out of 16 people hit by bedroom tax are disabled, never mind the rest. If you get turned down you could always:

Invite a lodger to stay in your under-occupied room. They could entertain the kiddies, get to know the wife and become part of the family. If you end up with one of those Fred West types, sell your sob story to a tabloid and you’ll soon get over it.

Work more, you lazy plebs. So what if there are not enough jobs? There are always opportunities! Only yesterday I looked in vain for some willing entrepreneur to shine my shoes whilst in town.

Have another child. You get to stay in your house and get a 25% increase in benefits for twins. We could then make sweeping statements about the feckless poor having more children to get benefits and you will be rewarded handsomely with another term of us in Government!

Anyway, there you have it – the bedroom tax will be of great benefit (excuse the pun!) to you all.

Till next time,

Augustus Misanthropicus Slone MP

Guide to the rules: bit.ly/LwSdmi

Blog on Housing benefit reforms: speye.wordpress.com

Public meeting with information and discussion on the benefit cuts – 11th April, 7pm at Sheffield Quaker Meeting House.

1913.

A YEAR THAT INFLUENCED EVERYTHING.
CHELLA QUINT.

My grandma would have been 100 this year, so I've decided to research and celebrate other centenarians in her honour. She was incredibly warm, funny, caring, generous, kind, talented and cheeky. Nothing shocked her. I thought I'd remember her by introducing her to all of you via 1913 – a person who influenced me from a year that influenced everything.

Her name was Celia Quint, but everyone called her Kitty. She would have loved Sheffield. She would have spent every dinnertime in Moor Fisheries. You'd never know she was in her 90s when she died. Attitude was everything. Take away the thick New York accent and she could have been a proper Sheffield nannan.

She was born in 1913. You know who else was born in 1913? Rosa Parks, activist and icon for the US Civil Rights movement whose actions inspired the Montgomery Bus Boycott. And Mary Leakey, who excavated the remains of some of the oldest prehistoric primates and worked out that we could walk upright before we were entirely human. And Hedy Lamarr, the Hollywood star who spent her evenings inventing. Her patent led to the development of spread spectrum frequency hopping, which we now use in computer networking, mobile phones and satellite television. My grandma had some very accomplished contemporaries.

They were all born before women had the right to vote. 1913 was a big year for that. My grandma was born on 5th January on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Five days later, back here in England, Emmeline Pankhurst wrote a letter urging women to up the stakes in the fight for universal suffrage. You can look it up. It's right there in the national archives with her inciting people to violence. In March, US suffragists held a huge demo in Washington DC. Back in Sheffield, suffragettes bombed the post boxes in Surrey Street, the High Street and Fitzalan Square one night in April. But what happened in June is what everyone remembers – Emily Davison ran out in front of the King's horse at the Epsom Derby. She was seriously injured and later died in hospital. No-one's really sure to this day if that was her plan or if she was just trying to stop the race.

It was a turbulent time for the arts as well. The Rite of Spring, a ballet composed by Igor Stravinsky and danced by the Ballets Russes, was causing havoc in Paris. On its opening night, the audience and critics started arguing in the aisles. They'd never seen such experimental choreography and didn't know what to make of the repetitive, atonal music. It caused a riot that was reported globally. By the time I was born, The Rite of Spring was considered a masterpiece, as were most of the paintings first exhibited together in New York in 1913 at the Armory Show, which caused a scandal of its own only a mile or two from my great-grandparents' apartment. A load of impressionists, modernists, cubists and expressionists took their art to the US and put up a huge warehouse exhibition – the first of its kind. Some of the work was quite traditional, but visitors were shocked at the futuristic ideas and old subjects painted in new ways. My grandma never batted an eye when we'd look through her big, glossy coffee table book of Toulouse Lautrec paintings. I guess that stuff was old hat to her.

It seems like innovation was as normal as breathing if you were born in 1913. That was the year the zip was invented, just over the river from New York City in New Jersey, and that same summer, stainless steel was patented right here in Sheffield. I remember banging on my grandma's pots and pans one day and sounding out the words stamped into the bottom. I asked her what it meant, and she said it was the best. Takes one to know one.

The 1913 Exhibition will appear as a pop-up gallery at Electric Works as part of both the Seven Hills Women's Institute's International Women's Day charity fundraiser event on the evening of Friday 15th March, and at Sheffield Zine Fest on Saturday 16th March.

[@1913Exhibition](http://celiaquint.wordpress.com)





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FOOD.

**JAPANESE.
CASSIE KILL.**

Many people argue that the Japanese diet is the healthiest in the world. Whilst this title is subject to fierce debate, there are certainly some health advantages to Japanese food that can easily be incorporated into the food we cook at home. There are three key foundations underlying the benefits of the Japanese diet:

Lots of boiled or steamed rice. Boiled and steamed rice provides a low-fat carbohydrate base for meals. Plus it's cheap, meaning it's an easy and affordable way to fill up healthily.

Lots of vegetables. Whilst many people may think of Japanese food as being primarily sushi-based, one recent survey found that the meal Japanese women most commonly cook for their families is vegetables simmered in broth. It's easy, quick, healthy and warming. Use miso soup from a paste to make the broth for a more Japanese flavour.

Lots of fish and less red meat. Japan accounts for 2% of the world's population but around 10% of the world's fish consumption. Although there is an ethical question about eating lots of certain types of fish, there are plenty of dietary advantages to choosing seafood. Much of the seafood commonly found in Japanese cuisine, such as eel and prawn, provides a high-protein, low-fat ingredient; much better for you than the high saturated fat red meat that the European diet is often based around. Some of the oily fish used in Japanese food, like salmon and tuna, contains health boosting omega-3 fatty acids.

MAKING SUSHI AT HOME.

Although expert chefs need many years of training to make sushi that could be classed as a work of art, simple sushi is not hard to make at home. There are a few principles to stick to, beyond which you should be able to make something tasty, healthy and impressive to dinner party guests (if you are generous enough to share!):

Buy proper sushi rice. This is essential, as it has a shorter grain and requires a slightly different method of cooking to long grain rice. It is easy to find in Asian food shops and bigger supermarkets and isn't expensive. While you're there, pick up rice vinegar and some decent soy sauce (e.g. Kikkoman), nori (seaweed sheets) if you want to make rolls (maki) and a tube of wasabi paste if you like a bit of a mustardy kick.

Buy very fresh fish. If you can't get your hands on fish you trust enough to eat raw, or you're too squeamish to enjoy such delights, you can use vegetables (blanched asparagus, radish or cucumber work well), omelette, tofu or cooked fish, or a combination.

Measure the rice and water precisely according to the packet instructions.

Cook rice without removing the lid. Seriously, don't remove the lid. It traps the steam in and helps the grains cook to sticky perfection.

Make a 'sushi-su'. This is light seasoning for the rice made out of sugar, salt and rice vinegar. Don't try to use malt vinegar. I've tried and it's not pleasant. Warm half a cup of rice vinegar in a small pan and add two tablespoons of caster sugar and two teaspoons of salt, stirring until dissolved. As soon as the rice is cooked, stir the seasoning through quickly with a wooden spoon.

Spread the rice out thinly so it cools quickly. I use a large chopping board or cover the surface with tin foil, and open the window to create a breeze.



SALMON MAKI.

**RECIPE BY CASSIE KILL.
SERVES 2.**

Nori sheets

Sushi rice, cooked and seasoned

**Raw, very fresh salmon fillet, cut into 1cm wide strips
(about the size of chocolate fingers)**

Raw cucumber or red pepper (optional)

Soy sauce

Wasabi paste

You will also need a sharp knife and a bamboo sushi mat (often found next to the sushi rice in the shop), plus a bowl of water and a clean, dry tea towel. Damp hands are essential for handling the rice but will spoil the nori, so you will find you need to wet and dry your hands often.

Lay the nori rough side up on the sushi mat. With damp hands, pick up a small handful of rice (seasoned as described above) and spread gently across the nori, leaving a few centimetres uncovered at the top for sealing the roll later. Lay the salmon strip at the bottom of the rice-covered seaweed sheet. If it isn't long enough, you might need a second piece. Add some vegetables if you like.

Picking up the mat, fold the bottom edge over the filling and roll slowly and tightly until you reach the top. Dampen the nori tab at the top with a damp finger and press gently down to stick. Wet your sharp knife and slice the roll into 6-8 pieces. Serve with soy sauce and wasabi paste.

**Cooking by Freddie Bates.
Photo by Sara Hill.**



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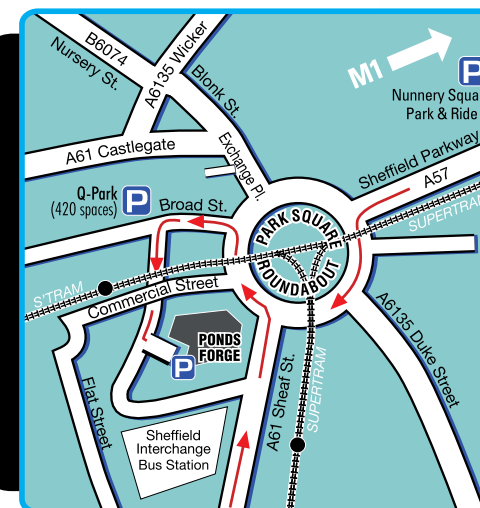
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WORD LIFE.

COLLATED BY HELEN MORT.

Guest editing Word Life feels like slipping my feet into shoes far too big for them, then tiptoeing around in the snow. It's a daunting, exciting task when there's so much going on in Sheffield poetry. February has seen even more new events springing up, including The Word Smack Cabaret in Rotherham, featuring John Hegley as its first guest.

Read on for reports of a snowy night at The Fat Cat with Longbarrow Press and new poems from Alan Buckley and Sarah Thomasin. Alan comes from Oxford and his debut pamphlet *Shiver* was published by Tall Lighthouse Press, while Sheffield's very own Sarah is the host of Slam Bam Thankyou Mam, which last month featured Kate Tempest in a slam with a difference: a poetry blind date. Entrants performed each other's work, doing their best to win first prize for their blind date, rather than themselves.

Please get in touch with joe@nowthenmagazine.com if you have South Yorks literary news or poems to submit.

HELEN MORT.

WINTER SONGS.

THE FAT CAT / 20TH JANUARY.
REVIEWER - BRIAN LEWIS.

Longbarrow Press opened the new year with Winter Songs, a specially curated evening of readings by Angelina Ayers, Matthew Clegg, Andrew Hirst, Chris Jones and Fay Musselwhite in the intimate (and, on this occasion, snowbound) setting of The Fat Cat.

The readings were presented in three themed 'movements' - home, landscape, and journey & exile. The readers alternated with each poem, producing dynamic shifts in tone and pace - Hirst's sparse, guttural phrasing contrasting with Musselwhite's rhythmic push-and-pull - while continually renewing and deepening the evening's focus. Departing from familiar formats created interesting and often unexpected associations between poems - for example, the institutional ambience of Ayers' 'Walking the Ward', in which a former nurse is re-admitted to hospital as a patient, mixing with that of Jones' 'Name', a poem for a prisoner 'ghosted over the fence'.

The resourcefulness of the poets was matched by the attentiveness of the capacity audience, making for a remarkable atmosphere as the 'journey' reached its end. A great start to 2013.

longbarrowpress.com

TRANSLATION.

A new message from Paris: It's 4 am.
I've made a raw food chocolate mousse
from avocado, cacao. Why did I do that? Now
my heart's beating fast. It's a cryptic organ,
with a language all of its own. I guess
you wanted to know what it had to say;
and, in a curious inversion of the Brit
abroad, asked it to speak more loudly.

It's daybreak here, the sunlight so pure
it's illicit. My heart's racing, and I can't
translate what it says any better
than you. Its tone is insistent, though.
All I can do is allow that impulse;
the one that led me, as a child, to place
my hand in an adult's, familiar or stranger,
believing that no harm could come.

ALAN BUCKLEY.

VINCENT'S OLIVE ORCHARD

Trees,
A field
And sunlight.
This ought to be
A pastoral scene:
Summer in the country.
But the sky is turbulent
But the branches writhe like serpents
But the ground lurches beneath his feet.
So he takes his brush and tries to show us
The way his nightmares infiltrate the day.
He mixes his too-vivid colours
Feverishly tries to show us
How his world won't stop moving:
Nothing is ever still
And there is no peace
Not even here
In sunlit
Olive
Trees.

SARAH THOMASIN.

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SEX PEST DENIES BEING
A LIBERAL DEMOCRAT

A notorious sex pest is seeking legal advice after it was claimed he was part of a Liberal Democrat ring.

In a documentary screened by Channel 4, it was claimed that the pervert had sickened a string of women by trying to convince them to 'try a third way'.

"It was humiliating," claimed political activist Geraldine Hooper. "I expect to be treated badly by MPs, but that's all part of the job when you work in a house full of public-schooled arseholes. But to be pressured into performing a U-turn on university tuition fees? That's the sort of thing that sickens me to the stomach."

Hooper claims the influential proper forced her to agree to a string of obscene acts, including one on welfare reform and another involving dead badgers.

"There were no depths he wouldn't plumb in his attempts to take me up the middle," wept Hooper. "These Lib Dems are obsessed with trying out compromising positions."

WORKFARE SCHEME

Mr Duncan Smith also hit back at criticism of comments that he made in which he claimed that supermarket work is as important as geology.

"When geologists can't find the food they want on the shelves, who is more important - them, the geologist, or the person who stacked the shelves? Geologists may be crucial in the search for hydrocarbons, but they're not so clever when it comes to searching for a tin of spaghetti hoops."

31 year-old shelf stacker Kelvin Harries agreed with Mr Duncan Smith and was keen to highlight his knowledge of the earth's physical structure and substance.

"Tectonic plates? Sorry mate, we only sell paper ones. They're in aisle four, next to the party food."

WORKFARE TO END
'SOMETHING-FOR-NOTHING CULTURE'
BY GIVING BIG COMPANIES SOMETHING
FOR NOTHING

Iain Duncan Smith has defended the controversial Workfare scheme by claiming that the best way to end a "something-for-nothing culture" is to provide multi-million pound companies with something for nothing.

The Work and Pensions Secretary rejected criticism that the only opportunity the government's back-to-work scheme provides is an opportunity for employers not to pay any wages.

"Providing corporations with a workforce they don't have to pay will give the unemployed an opportunity to experience having a job without actually having a job," he explained.

This will allow them to make a seamless transition from being made to feel worthless and not working to being made to feel worthless and working.

"They will also have the security of knowing they'll be no worse off when the company dispenses with their services at the end of the scheme."

LIB DEM ACCUSATIONS

Nick Clegg refused to be drawn into controversy, claiming he "couldn't remember" ever knowingly being a Liberal Democrat himself. Grainy images of the deputy PM have surfaced on the internet, which appear to show him wearing a yellow rosette.

"I can't comment on those for legal reasons", said Clegg, "but as my lawyer has explained, it's hard to positively identify me in any of these shots. It could have been anyone in Cameron's bedroom, wearing that gimp mask."

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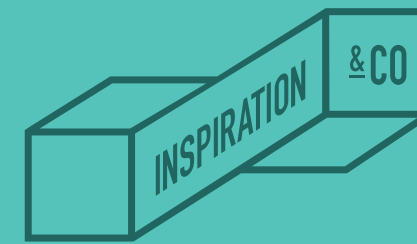
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HANDIEDAN.

DUTCH COLLAGE ARTIST TALKS ABOUT HER ART.
INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY.

Handiedan is the artistic moniker of Hanneke Treffers. Born, bred and currently based in The Netherlands, she works with mixed media, creating startlingly intricate collages from materials as diverse as old coins, classic-era pin ups, playing cards, sheet music and vintage stamps. Her art has been exhibited all over the world, including the Musée La Halle Saint Pierre in Paris and Thinkspace Gallery in Los Angeles, and of course is exhibited throughout this issue of Now Then. A pleasure indeed.

What got you started as an artist?

My grandfather worked as a shoe designer in The Netherlands and Paris. At the age of five till eight I spent a lot of time in his workshop – he behind his desk making handmade wooden model ships and me sitting on the ground painting, drawing and wondering about the finest details and the patience my grandpa works with. I liked this so much and felt I wanted to do it too. In the meantime my older cousin went to art school, so he was also a big inspiration for me.

At the age of 17 I went to the St Joost Academy of Art and Design in Breda and developed my skills and passion for drawing, photography and creating with the computer. After art school I started working as a designer for different companies, but after a couple of years I wanted to start something for myself. I started creating freehand work in the afterhours and after a couple of years it developed into the collage pin-art I became known for.

What is your working process when creating a new collage?

Before I start designing I usually only know the atmosphere the artwork must have. It's a process that builds up to the point where I can sketch the positions of my characters. I also sometimes pick a fictive subject as a starting point, but I don't know exactly how it will look.

I create the pin-ups by mixing and matching the different anatomical features from other vintage pin-ups to create a unique character. The characters vary from real life to fantasy when it comes to their anatomical features or bodily positions. I then use the computer, which gives me the opportunity to experiment with all the different features and ornaments I have collected. Once all the collected stuff is placed together for the basic design, I then start cutting and layering the collage.

Where do you get your source materials from?

I always keep my eyes and ears open for new materials for my collage work. I also gather the vintage stuff on the street, in old buildings and old boxes in the attic, at flea markets, browsing the internet and while travelling. People even send me old money to use in my pieces, which is great. In my art you also find Chinese post papers or papers from cook books, all kind of stamps, old fabrics from old chests, rusty nails, cigar bands, my grandma's old bridge book, playing cards, dried flowers, Spanish fans and of course the vintage pin-up ladies and old movie posters. The most unusual elements I have used are my visa from my old passport and a cigarillo bands collection.

What tool do you use regularly and which could you not live without?

My film negative Fiskars scissors from Finland. They've been travelling with me since art school. I do everything concerning collage with my beloved red scissors. I once lost them and almost had several bodily failures.

How much of your work is enhanced digitally? Do you use a computer just to 'touch up' images, or do you add or combine elements digitally as well?

The computer gives me the opportunity to play around and experiment with all the different ornaments before I put them in place. I first set

out the texture I am going to work on. By playing around with different body parts I create the main character or centre piece. Generally, once I get done with the main piece I start putting things around it to see what elements work well with each other. When they find their place I leave them there and start adding new ornaments and finish it with digital doodling. When the digital design is done I have the basis for my originals. I rip the design apart, delete a lot of elements but keep the main parts to use them as the basis for printing on wood, zinc and collages on paper. I then add small differences and extras with the gathered old materials, and start on the original collage.

Much of your work is quite sexual in a classic, burlesque way. Are you trying to make a statement or are these purely aesthetic choices? Some of it could be described as 'erotic' but I wouldn't call it 'erotica'.

When people interview me, one of the most frequent questions is, 'What does your work mean?' I find that a hard question to answer for multiple reasons. I try to create pieces which allow the viewer to interact with their own thoughts, interpretations and imagination. I would love for the viewer to search within themselves for their own message of what my work means to them. Some people get highly emotional about my work because of what they see in it. Who am I to deny them that very feeling or experience by telling them what I think it should mean? Some people say it is feminist or gay art, some call it retro erotica, but in the end everyone makes up their own mind and that is the way I intend it. For me, my work is purely aesthetic.

How has your art developed over the years?

I can truly say that since 2007 my work has become more complex. It has evolved in image, depth and layering. I'm constantly seeking more definition, literally and figuratively. I use more historical, current and future elements, all entwined in my work. You could almost call it time travelling through my own developments and interests.

What do you dislike in art?

Art sparks a lot of interaction and interpretations. To truly understand and feel the art I believe that one must open up to the possibilities of what art can bring – whether you understand it or not, positive or negative. When I look at art I don't have to like it. It doesn't have to be what I find beautiful or inspiring. Why should I then have an opinion about it? I wish everyone could enjoy art with all it has to bring without wanting to have an opinion.

What are you working on at the moment? Any upcoming exhibitions?

A large museum group show called Hey Modern Art & Pop Culture at Musée La Halle Saint Pierre in Paris. It opened January 24th and will be running till August 23rd. I am very pleased and excited to be showing here with four new pieces. This is the first time showing my collages in Paris.

Right at this very moment I'm letting the creative juices flow while making some collage art pieces for my solo show Elegant Universe at Thinkspace Gallery in Los Angeles, which opens on 6th April 2013. I'm hopeful there might also be a new mural project during my stay in LA. More details to follow on my website.

Good advice you wish you'd been told earlier?

Stay true to yourself. Stay original and keep listening. Listen to advice asked and given, but don't lose track of your own goals and aspirations.

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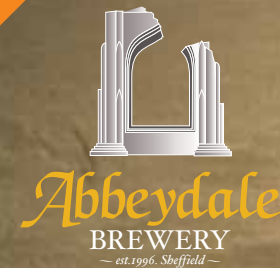


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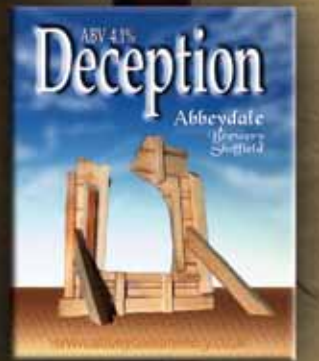
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MARCH LISTINGS

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Saturday 2nd: SSS + Ryan Young. Punk rock and thrash metal.

Thursday 7th: Shakespeares Jazz Club presents: Just Friends. Sax led Jazz, Latin and funk rock band. £4.50 on the door.

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SOUND.

PROGRESSION.
TOM BELSHAW.

“Do you ever feel like a plastic bag?”

It’s a quandary whose true meaning resonates through the annals of time, back to the widely accepted dawn of intentionality; an era that cultivated a symbiotic relationship between abstract thought and expression and is widely accepted to be mankind’s first awakening; a time 60,000 years before Katy Perry was widely accepted as a credible musician. A simpler time. A better time.

Like a Latin breakcore cover album, the music that existed 60 millennia ago wasn’t exactly Mercury Award material. It leaned fairly heavily toward the percussive persuasion, but it was expressive and musical nonetheless. Give it a few years for civilisation to simmer and Robert’s your mother’s brother – culture. I’m paraphrasing somewhat but I’m on a word budget here.

Music is intrinsically affected by society and other artistic mediums. Take whichever abominable wretch writes Perry’s ditties as an example. At some point they more than likely flicked over to Film4 after a long day drowning puppies, caught the last 45 minutes of American Beauty and had a brain fart. The paradox here is that music has a profound influence on society too. It’s like some sort of causal loop system where an inanimate plastic bag sings songs about itself.

The relationship between music and societal change has been apparent throughout the ages. Think of a period in modern history and the music that defined that time is sure to follow. We define experiences by decade. Think of the 60s and 90% of you will instinctively hear The Beatles. This is because the music and politics of the time became one, like stirring jam into warm rice pudding.

Look back to the 19th century and you see the intellectual ideals of Romanticism reflected in the music of its time. The expressive and emotive Romantic era of classical composition saw its stars become scholars and the people unite as aristocratic ideals were scrapped and the music handed back to the middle classes. It was an important time for both musical and political awakenings as they both found ways to influence and manipulate each other.

The punk rock movement that infected the 70s was a callout to the tame, watered down music the world had settled for and quickly became the soundtrack to mass rebellion. The youths were revolting in every sense. The punk subculture that grew out of it was fueled by palpable disdain for anything establishment flavoured. The movement taught many to boycott convention and made the oft ignored youth of

the time a true force to be reckoned with and their official soundtrack something to be remembered.

The 90s saw the advent of the Spice Girls and saw someone finally do something about women’s rights. The nation saw a harem of shrieking tossers single handedly shatter the glass ceiling, and perform their post modern take on the selfless work of the suffragettes, albeit without the climactic gesture of throwing themselves under the hooves of a stable of racing horses. Shame.

The term ‘progress’ suggests a positive increase and sometimes its use just isn’t applicable. Perhaps it’s more apt to say ‘change’. Things don’t have to change for the better. We’ve all noticed that Big Macs and Twisters have been getting smaller for years. So as society progresses music must change.

As we find ourselves in the middle of exponential progression in all facets of life we see music struggling to keep up. Where so many decades were looked upon fondly as hotbeds of creativity and fresh ideas, we are currently trapped in a loop. Music has always taken influence from what came before, but since the dawn of the new millennium music as a whole has been using Mark Twain’s famous ponderings on the impossibility of new ideas as a justification for lethargy.

In the early noughties juno synths and hairspray made a comeback as the 80s was raided for its sounds and fashion. As we find ourselves in decade number 2 so we find the house music and double denim that defined the 90s saturating the streets. Although superior from a technical standpoint, most of the music on offer to the current generation is less an homage and more a clone. There’s little evolution – just faithful reproduction.

I often worry about the lack of vision 2020 is going to have. If we’re emulating the music of a decade or two before then we’re going to start copying a copy. You can’t clone a clone. If music and society have been intertwined for so long, then using the sonics that defined another generation to define the current one is going to lead to misrepresentation and a lack of identity. I don’t want to be remembered as part of the generation who were too lazy to come up with new ideas. Although that’s still preferable to the generation who felt “like a plastic bag”.

LIVE.

TOM, NICK AND LENNY 3.

LANTERN THEATRE.
2ND FEBRUARY.

REVIEWER – PAUL ROBSON.

On 2nd February the Lantern Theatre held a sold-out charity event to help raise funds for the British Red Cross. The main attraction was that some of Sheffield’s greatest acoustic musicians gathered to pay tribute to the songwriting troubadours Tom Waits, Nick Cave and Leonard Cohen by each including a cover song in their sets. The gig featured local artists Captives on the Carousel, Hungarian Lanterns, Ian Bramall and Elliot J Huntley. Although the theme may not sound like a cheerful Saturday night out, all the acts were joined by an eager and responsive crowd.

It was surprising how effortlessly the songs of Waits, Cave and Cohen accompanied the artists’ own work. Each act was able to infuse the same qualities of melancholia, mystery and pathos into their performances. The acoustic duo Sarah Morrey (guitar & vocals) and Ben Eckersley (cello) who make up Captives on the Carousel delivered a stream of enchanting and poetic words accompanied by haunting strings. The band Hungarian Lanterns (named after a line in the Leonard Cohen song ‘Take This Waltz’) also bestowed their performance with a dark potent quality, although it was lightened by the comic sensibilities of lead vocalist Anthony J Brown, who combined the dark romanticism of Leonard Cohen with the droll humour of Morrissey.

Elliot J Huntley, who plays mandolin for the Hungarian Lanterns, delivered an affecting solo set comprised entirely of Tom Waits songs. His voice may not have the same stark grittiness but his soft vocal phrasing and eloquent playing created a new found subtlety.

Before starting his performance, Ian Bramall delivered a witty comment about the Lantern Theatre being the only sold-out gig he had ever been part of. His self-deprecating manner endearingly flowed through his music as he sang lyrics in a distinct Sheffield accent. Joined by other guest musicians, Bramall also showcased his expertise on the harmonica.

The evening’s entertainment was fittingly complemented by the décor, which combined a mix of the avant-garde and the theatrical. Between each act there was also a soundtrack of songs by Waits, Cave and Cohen to help set the mood. Overall the show was delivered with much passion and commitment, making it a proud tribute.

VILLAGERS.

LEADMILL.
8TH FEBRUARY.

REVIEWER – ROB ALDAM.

Conor O’Brien, the frontman and driving force behind Irish band Villagers, seems to take everything in his stride. After their debut album **Becoming A Jackal** was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize and received wide critical acclaim in 2010, he didn’t let himself get ruffled by the prospect of recording the difficult second album. Their follow up, **{Awayland}**, sees O’Brien opting for a much bigger and brasher sound, expanding the boundaries of their music and incorporating diverse instrumentation and styles. Tonight, they look like they were born to play on a bigger stage.

Opening proceedings this evening are Stealing Sheep, with Lucy leading the beat on the tom toms. It’s fair to say that a good proportion of the early arrivals look slightly perplexed when they start to play, but by the end they had won over a fair raft of the crowd. While last year’s **Into the Diamond Sun** is an impressive body of work, where the Liverpool ladies really excel is in their live performances. Pounding rhythms are combined with beautiful vocal harmonies, creating a trance-like state which seems to sway through the crowd. ‘Paper Moon’ is reminiscent of Echo and the Bunnymen, while ‘Shut Eye’ is more upbeat and joyous. Stealing Sheep are a band who seem to be born to play at festivals, and tonight’s performance brought a bit of sunshine to The Leadmill.

Villagers open with the delicate ‘My Lighthouse’ before shifting up a gear into a much more upbeat tempo. Along with expanding the band since they last played The Leadmill, their sound has a noticeably greater scope and resonance. There is a nautical theme flowing throughout Villagers’ music, and given that they come from a seaside town they clearly have a strong connection with the sea. They play a mix of songs from both albums, O’Brien’s beautifully resonant voice effortlessly carrying itself to all four corners of the room. Unsurprisingly, the singles from the first album are enthusiastically received, however new songs ‘Judgement Call’, ‘Nothing Arrived’ and ‘Passing A Message’ also elicit warm applause.

Halfway through the set they take the pace down a notch, the beautiful ‘Becoming A Jackal’ and ‘Set the Tigers Free’ seeming to eddy soothingly around the room. But Villagers are a highly versatile group and have the ability to really go for it when they want, as shown when they rock out during ‘The Bell’. They end to rapturous applause with ‘Early Pleasures’, before coming back out for a richly deserved encore, aptly closing the night with ‘Ship of Promises’. Villagers are a rare combination of immaculate musicianship, delicate lyricism and beautifully infectious songs, and tonight they stole everyone’s hearts.

LIVE.

MICHAEL J. TINKER.

LIVE @ 215.
15TH FEBRUARY.

REVIEWER – TASHA FRANEK.

Probably the most mature and sophisticated Friday night out I’ve had in Sheffield, Live @ 215 is a music venue for those with a taste for the subdued. Run by The Crowded House church group, there was a very apparent community present, but one that I was very promptly welcomed into. The evening was fuelled by cappuccinos and carrot cake included in the ticket price.

The set was split into two sections with an interval to top up on coffees and exchange opinions with new friends. The absence of a support act was endearing as it put all of the attention on the inspiring talent of the entertainment for the evening, Mr Michael J Tinker. For those of you who aren’t familiar, Tinker is a folk artist who released his debut album **Shores of Amerikay** last year and is now doing the customary rounds of showcasing it. I managed to catch some of his set at the Folk Forest during Tramlines, a great counterpoint to the much more personal venue choice of his own local church. With such a different crowd and atmosphere I really wasn’t sure what to expect as Michael took to the metaphorical stage for part one of the set.

Nerves were very much apparent as he began softly and slowly with the track ‘Cole Not Dole’. Vocally and instrumentally, Tinker and his band were on point from start to finish and as confidence set in they really brought the power and enthusiasm that I felt was a little constrained on the album. I fell instantly in love with The Incredible Washboard Pete II on percussion, who used everything from whisks to wind chimes during the set and sported an excellent signature waistcoat, perfectly fitted for any eccentric instrumentalist. Highlights included a beautiful instrumental track called ‘Jonny’s Song’, written for Tinker’s son, which demonstrated the high level of musical talent in the room, and a couple of my favourite tracks from the album, ‘House Carpenter’ and ‘Hammer’, which exploded into life in the flesh.

The night was sewn together with stories about each track alongside a collection of brilliantly told yet terrible jokes. A very enjoyable evening as a whole, and I look forward to seeing what is next for Tinker and co.

LISTINGS.

HOSTED BY COOL BEANS.
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The snow’s thawing, the days are getting longer, New Year’s resolutions are now a distant and hilarious memory and you can stop wearing three pairs of underwear in an attempt to stop your nether regions falling off due to frost bite. Yep, it’s officially March and you’ve got a whole year of excitement ahead of you. That means festivals, bank holidays, wearing shorts, bird watching, internet memes, chocolate frogs, mahogany coffee tables and more events in the Sheffield region than you can shake a brick at.

PANGAEA.

8th March / Harley / £6 adv.

Consistently one of the most energetic parties in the city, March sees Pangaea specially fly in France’s dÉbruit and his mêlée of jack-knifing riddims, booby-trapped syncopation and bass heavy collisions.

DNAE & THE INDIGO SOUL PROJECT.

13th March / The Hop / Free.

The soulful sounds of the Steel City Soul Club and Burleskimo were coming from one lady only - Sister Dnaë Wellington. Her latest project allows her to take the rightful position of centre stage, headline set. Support comes from Riders and Sam Harrison.

OHM SWEET OHM.

15th March / Plug / £8 adv.

Ohm Sweet Ohm, the brainchild of Tom Weatherall, has descended upon Sheffield like an almighty rave wave, first showcasing Maya Jane Coles, then Joris Voorn. Now it’s time for Eats Everything to step up to the platters.

SHARROW LANTERN FUNDRAISER.

23rd March / Haggler’s Corner / £5 otd.

Every year the peaceful Sharrow surroundings receive a fun injection of magnificent proportions thanks to its Lantern Festival. We’re talking carrying-giant-bamboo-whales-down-the-street fun here. Support the fundraiser and you might see two giant bamboo whales in 2013.

HEYMOONSHAKER.

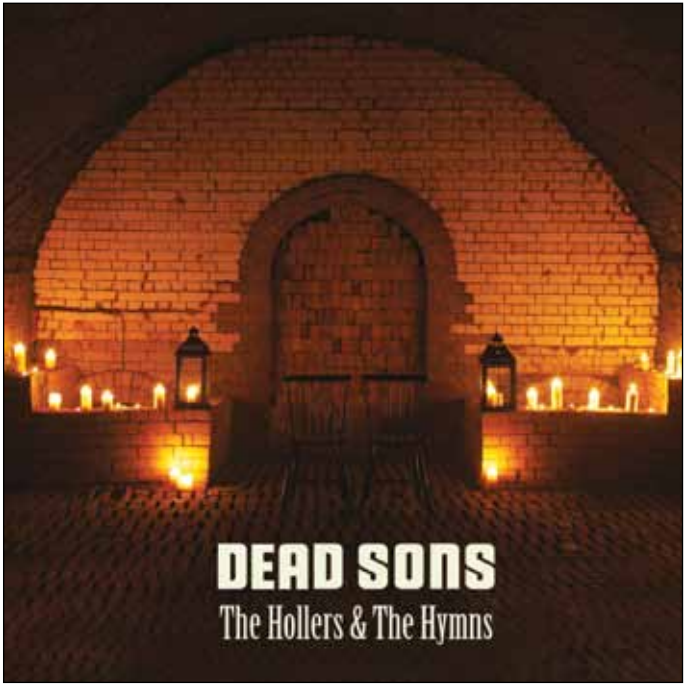
27th March / Lantern Theatre / £10 adv.

Fresh from a three year tour as street performers and collectively racking up over 8.5 million hits on Youtube, beatbox blues duo Dave Crowe and Andy Balcon headline an evening of talent at the Lantern.

FIRST WORD & COOL BEANS.

28th March / The Bowery / Free.

First Word Records and Cool Beans first came together over Tramlines Festival last summer. The experience was so enjoyable that they’ve decided to well, come together again. Performances on the night include The Indecision, the JA Soul Ensemble and the inimitable Andy H.



DEAD SONS.

THE HOLLERS & THE HYMNS.
BEREY RECORDS.

REVIEWER – GORDON BARKER.

The Arctic Monkeys are often mentioned when talking about Dead Sons – guilty already – but in my opinion this comparison is trite and only stops the listener from hearing their music with a fresh set of ears. Whilst they certainly have the energy, Dead Sons are darker; a hell of a lot darker.

Their debut album is certainly appropriately named. There are two distinct styles running throughout, and straight from the off with opening tracks ‘Ghost Train’ and ‘Shotgun Woman’ we are introduced to the “hollers” side of the Dead Sons coin. This is the raucous, balls-to-the-wall side, the audio equivalent of those last blurry memories of a drunken night walking from the venue to someone’s house because you’ve got lots of energy left and you absolutely have to drink a bottle of whisky. Constant layered drumming provides a tumbling, frantic energy and sets the pace through each song, only letting up when the band want to shift focus.

On the flipside of the coin are the dark ballads of ‘Temptation Pool’, ‘The Quest For Fire’, ‘The Hollers and The Hymns’ and ‘Hold On’. Evoking Jim Morrison lost (and found) in the desert, these ‘hymns’ manage to entwine quiet personality with the amnesia of being told fantastic tales. They are both musically and emotionally arresting, and for me the stronger of their two sides.

This release has been a long time coming, but even though a fair few of these songs have already been available for a while it is good to hear them in context. Whilst there are obvious comparisons to be made – to Nick Cave and Tom Waits in particular – I think it is paramount that you listen without these constantly going round in your head. These influences are clear, and bloody good influences to have, but Dead Sons bring their own style. It consists of a restlessness which, whilst almost angry, has a huge sense of being entirely self-inflicted. It’s jarring, reflective and drunken. But this drunkenness is not put across as childish fun and it most certainly isn’t a night out on West Street. It feels more mature and purposeful than that. No 70p Carlsberg here – just Guinness and single malts.



LOUVILLE.

LOUVILLE.
BAD TASTE RECORDS.

REVIEWER – BEN DOREY.

Louville are a collective of musicians from Sheffield trying something a little different. Their biography explains that the project is based around sampling an environment for each set of songs, and using a restricted palette of instruments to embellish it. This may sound very clever on paper, but what about the music? Thankfully it doesn’t disappoint. Managing to steer clear of method-based pretentiousness, the use of sampled environment takes a backseat for the most part, providing the glue to hold together what are very nicely layered, musically adept electronica compositions with a tendency towards pulling emotional heartstrings clearly born from a post rock influence.

Appropriately named opener ‘Go’ is one of the strongest on the EP. Loops of sinister guitar and ringing delay lead into a bashy and heavily affected hip hop beat that wouldn’t sound out of place on a DJ Shadow release. The way the elements are mixed is subtly disorientating. ‘I Still Think Of You From Time To Time’ is a far more nostalgic song, relying on familiar chord progressions and warm horn and synth lines to complement a crackly background environment.

‘Urchin’ is one of the tunes where the environment of the track is more indelibly woven into the song. Trickles of water in rock pools give way to waves of reverb tails and twinkles of piano and guitar. The only melody that comes to the fore is a little organ fiddle, which I must say is musically weaker and adds a twee-ness that betrays the depth of the music. ‘Mel’s Song’ has a similarly twee atmosphere, but this time the background samples represent an environment even more strongly, carrying the listener back to childhood seaside trips, and later introducing the voices of the band members larking about. The carefree atmosphere here is complemented by the twee-ness, rather than undermined by it.

‘Circle of Circle’ sees the EP returning to full strength, a delicate piano meander over shimmering, subtly swelling effect feedback. A perfect short piece. Finisher ‘In Corners’ sees another excursion into woozy nostalgia, dusty organ chords falling in simple and constant resolutions as a four-to-the-floor kick pins evolving layers into the mix. Although I found myself wanting another element to come and play harmonic foil to the others in this seven-minute track, taken in context it seems well paced.

Overall this is an emotive and fascinating record, whose specific approach adds intrigue for the attentive listener without ever becoming the overtly guiding force, letting the playing and arrangements speak for themselves.



PVT.

HOMOSAPIEN.
FELTE.

REVIEWER – FRED OXYB.

Many bands can only dream of making records in beautiful, remote places which not only influence their music but also the process of composition. It seems like the ultimate holiday for a musician. As long as you don’t get distracted by the long walks and stunning vistas, it would also seem to be the ultimate recipe for composing and recording exceptional music. PVT, the Australian experimental three-piece formerly known as Pivot, have done just that with their fourth studio album **Homosapien**. Their outback of choice: a remote house in the centre of their homeland with nothing more than a bunch of gear and a sound engineer for company. As a huge admirer of the band, particularly their epic instrumental works **Make Me Love You** and **O Soundtrack My Heart**, I was curious to hear the results of this retreat into the wilderness.

PVT are no strangers to experimentation and versatility. They manage to make an uncharacteristically large sound for a three-piece, blending traditional drum, bass and guitar elements with synths, loops, programmed percussion and field recordings. While they began as an instrumental act, since their last record **Church With No Magic** they have featured lyrics over the top of this technical wizardry. The danger of incorporating so many musical elements is over-complication. This is exactly the problem the band managed to avoid brilliantly in their early days, focusing on groove and texture and allowing sparse melodies to sit over the top. The addition of lyrics has therefore unsettled me a little bit because it represents a significant change in style from what PVT used to do so brilliantly.

What remains are the gloriously warm synths, such as in opener and first single ‘Shiver’. There is no lack of sensitivity or emotion, but what is missing is the sense of unity which has been present before. Once the record kicks off properly it becomes a somewhat disjointed affair, with some tracks like ‘Evolution’ harking back to Gary Numan-style synth pop, while others like the penultimate ‘Casual Success’ work around more epic vocals and distorted synths.

I like a lot of the music on this record but it is not the PVT I used to love. There isn’t much to be said for repeating formulas ad infinitum, but I find their new sound quite generic. Unlike earlier efforts, which to me sounded unique, each piece on this record reminds me of something I’ve already heard by another band. While there is nothing but quality, somewhat lamentably there is not enough originality to keep me interested beyond a handful of listens.



HOOKWORMS.

PEARL MYSTIC.
GRINGO RECORDS.

REVIEWER – BEN GOULDER.

Hookworms have been floating around the UK DIY scene for quite some time now, and this month sees the Leeds-based quintet release their debut album **Pearl Mystic** through Gringo Records.

The album begins with ‘Away/Towards’, almost nine minutes of seismic, tension-building drones working into a crescendo of atmospheric, reverberated pop. Second track ‘Form & Function’, a song previously featured on a split release with Kogmaza, shows more of Hookworms’ pop sensibilities with an added garage rock element. Reminiscent of something you would hear on the Back From The Grave compilations of 60s rock, there is a huge element of nostalgia in this track. That organ.

Next up is the first of three interludes. Much like the intro, this one offers more atmospheric drones and noise that leads perfectly into ‘In Our Time’, a slower number which showcases Hookworms’ psychedelic element at its best. It’s gloomy, moody and introspective. Another nod to 60s psychedelia is ‘Since We Have Changed’. This song sounds like it could be used in an Austin Powers soundtrack (in a good way). The vocals are barely noticeable, whispered yet earnest.

‘Preservation’ brings the pace up a little. It’s chaotic yet confined, like when new wave bands started getting a bit fruity and experimental. If anything in Hookworm’s set is going to get people moving then it’s this, thanks to the regimented, harsh bassline combined with the pure aggression of the drums and guitars filled with fuzz and wah. Suddenly everything fades out to a cacophony of feedback and into the second interlude.

‘What We Talk About’ is the final “real” song on the album. It’s sparse, empty and overall feels cold; a perfect sound for travelling on a cold winter’s night, sitting on a long bus-journey and blocking out the sounds of the middle-aged man trying to talk to you as he mumbles into his can of Special Brew. It all fades out in the drones of the final interlude and everything goes silent.

Pearl Mystic is an exceptional debut album from Hookworms. Fans of The Stooges and The Brian Jonestown Massacre will dig this. Get into this band and watch them in the smallest venue possible before it’s too late.

LETHERETTE.

WOLVERHAMPTON DUO TALK INNOCENT PLEASURES.
INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY.

Letherette are a production duo based in Wolverhampton. Now signed to Ninja Tune after releasing two wildly popular EPs on Ho Tep, a sub-label of London-based Elgo Records, childhood friends Rich Roberts and Andy Harber have just put the finishing touches on their self-titled debut album, due for release next month.

Although undeniably indebted to legendary hip hop producers like DJ Premier and J Dilla, there are also generous twists of house, disco, funk and soul in the Letherette sound, as well as a clear love of experimenting with new production techniques to create hybrid tracks that evade specific categorisation. I chatted to the pair about the origins of their collaboration, the upcoming album and innocent pleasures.

When did you start making music together?

Rich: We grew up together, so whatever we did we did together. So first of all we started playing football, and playing out on our bikes, but when we got to about 13 or 14 we got into music quite heavily. We both started learning the guitar. Straight away we used to teach each other what we'd learnt and jam together crudely.

Andy: It kind of all changed when we met Steve Wilkinson (Bibio) and we started going to college. That's when we started buying synths and drum machines and samplers. Me and Rich would sit around in my bedroom for hours making massive pieces - ten minutes of self-indulgent synth. We used to circuit bend as well didn't we?

Rich: Yeah we did all sorts of stuff. Straight away we got into avant-garde, noisy electro-acoustic music. But we started taking it more seriously after university. We used to make house tracks on really crude samplers, which to me still sound really charming. I'd like to release an album of all the stuff we used to do when we were 19-20. This sampler was just the most basic thing. You could get it from Argos. You'd find ways of getting extra sampling time and re-sampling things.

Your new album is out in April. What was the process of creating it like?

Andy: We always did house music as we were growing up, but I suppose we got really into sampling and hip hop, using MPCs and samplers. We came up with the mix we did for BTS Radio and the stuff we put on the EPs... that was a good year of just getting really into hip hop. Since then I suppose we've kind of taken it further and tried to combine all our techniques. This album isn't one-minute beat tracks. We've tried to make full 'songs' using that very Letherette sound we've got on the other EPs.

Electronic music can be a bit serious at times. I get the feeling that, with your own productions and your track selection on mixes, that there isn't such a thing as a guilty pleasure for you.

Rich: Exactly, yeah. I had that conversation coincidently with my girlfriend last night. She said to me, 'Is there someone you listen to who you won't tell anyone about?' And there isn't. Andy's the same, and I suppose that's why we get on so well. We just like shit that we like. If it's Phil Collins and we think it's amazing, we'll put it on a mix. We're just doing a mix now for Kiss FM. It starts off with a track - I won't tell you what it is - but I reckon people will think it's ridiculous, but we love it.

Your first video for lead single 'D&T' came out last week. Were you involved in making it?

Rich: Yeah, we pretty much did it 50-50 with Tom Scholefield (Konx-om-Pax). We'd seen his videos before and he sent us a treatment for this video, and he just seemed like he was on the same wavelength as us. It's been quite a long process, but he gave us an idea, spent a day filming lots of stuff and sent it back, and we sent him ideas with chopped up collage videos. Me and Andy spent weeks just taking videos from various sources, recording them off VHS and chopping them into pieces. Like you said before about us being fun and not putting up boundaries,

I think the video shows that as well. We take it seriously but there's definitely a fun side to it.

Serious about having fun.

Rich: Yeah, it's true.

Andy: If it wasn't fun we wouldn't do it.

Rich: But there are also tracks on the album that are totally inward-looking headphone music. It's just about being taken somewhere in your head.

I think 'In July Focus' was the first track I heard by you and it's probably still my favourite. It hits that sweet spot of using a sample but making something completely different out of it. Did something 'click' when you were making it?

Rich: Cheers! To be honest it's been five years since we made that track...

Andy: At the time we were making so many. I think that one stood out more than most, but there was such a lot of music in a similar vein being made that we probably didn't realise until it went on our first EP and got great feedback.

Rich: Less so now, but three or four years ago we were just banging out hundreds and hundreds of beats. I can remember us doing it, because it used a particular sampling technique that we'd never used before. It's one of those things that if we tried to do the same technique again it would just sound like 'In July'. If you heard the original that it's sampled from, you'd know exactly what it is.

I did actually track down the original earlier today. It's interesting, because there's so many little sections you've taken it's really different hearing the whole thing.

Andy: Cheers man. Even on the new album we sample, but we've progressed to taking smaller samples and digging into them and filling them out. But where we are now has come from tracks like 'In July'.

Which producers would you recommend to our readers at the moment?

Rich: Lee Gamble is someone we've been listening to recently. We went to university with him. When we first met Lee it was evident that he was quite a clever, tasteful, very avant-garde composer. The stuff he did before with [multi-arts collective] Cyrk was much less accessible, for want of a better word. But his recent EP really hit the spot I think. The concept behind it [making techno and ambient tracks from the breakdowns of old jungle mixtapes] was really nice, and knowing Lee a bit it was really nice to hear him doing stuff like that. It really inspired both of us. Maybe on our next album you'll hear Lee Gamble influences!

You're doing a set for the Boiler Room next week. Do you have any surprises up your sleeves for that?

Rich: Yeah, we're just gonna play Phil Collins, Michael Bolton and Simply Red.

I seriously think you should do an 'Innocent Pleasures' set.

Rich: [laughs] Yeah man, I'm totally up for that.

Andy: Luther Vandross!

Rich: Luther Vandross, just chopped to pieces. But that's really where Letherette came from. Andy started the concept of it ten years ago, something like that. Originally it was taking really naff samples and making them really fresh. Like sampling [smooth jazz saxophonist] Kenny G - sampling the worst, most horrible, cheesy music but making it amazing.

soundcloud.com/letherette

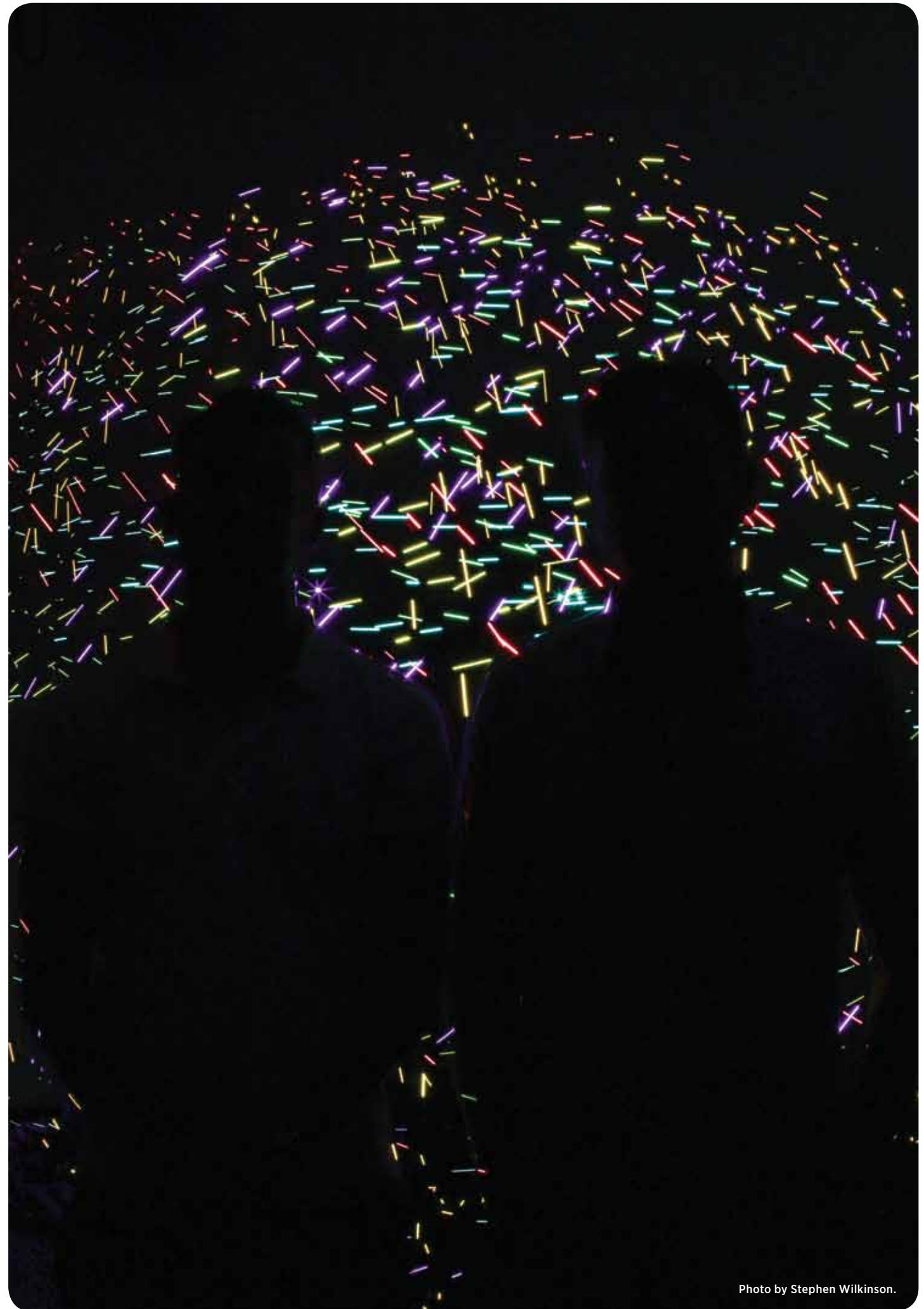


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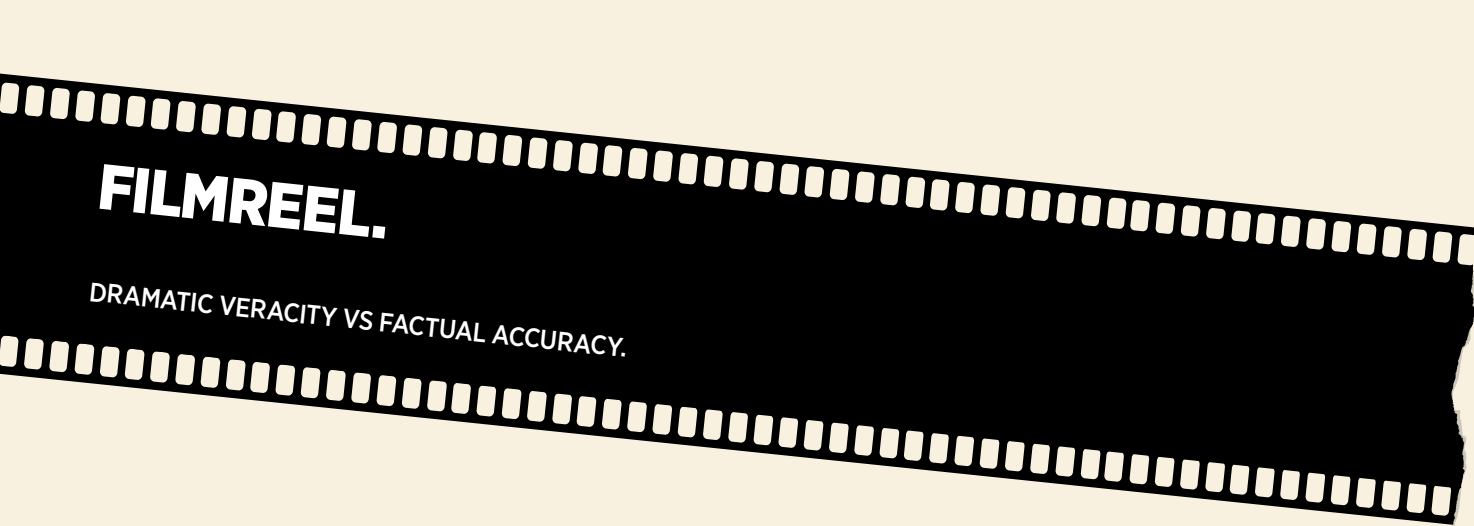
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ZERO DARK THIRTY.

JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES.

Kathryn Bigelow is under attack. The first woman director ever to win an Oscar had to be aware that making a film like **Zero Dark Thirty** is asking for trouble. What she probably didn't account for was that the siege she was to face would be as tight and comprehensive as the one her film depicts: the covert operation that took down Bin Laden. Nevertheless, it's the depiction of everything that led to it that has raised so much controversy in so many quarters.

The most vociferous comes from author and political activist Naomi Wolf, who not only condemns the film's legitimisation of torture, but goes as far as to compare Bigelow with Leni Riefenstahl, the filmmaker best known for her Nazi propaganda. And she certainly makes a good case for it.

The way the film establishes the link between evidence attained through torture and the intelligence that propelled the finding of Bin Laden is contrived. How accurate it is, we may never know, but it does almost literally say that 'it was not from torture, but it kind of was – so that's ok'. And then the narrative moves on...

To some degree, Zero Dark Thirty is the counterpoint to Paul Greengrass's **Green Zone**. If the latter takes on the duty of coming clean about the non-existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the former is an endorsed alibi which excuses a lot of the US government's unlawful actions.

The trajectory of Bigelow's career has been uneven, to say the least. She's gone from an underrated filmmaker - capable of delivering the brilliant **Point Break** and a visionary flop like **Strange Days** - to a considerably overrated Hollywood commodity.

The Hurt Locker transformed her from edgy indie darling to Oscar-winning juggernaut overnight and the rest is history. In regards to this multi award-winning film, a strange phenomenon occurs when I attempt to watch it. Twice I tried and twice I've fallen asleep. And I never, ever fall asleep watching a film. Considering I have a 'personal interest' in landmines – disabling them was my father's duty during the Angolan colonial war of the 1970s – I daresay this reveals more about the film than my sleeping patterns.

On the other hand, I count Zero Dark Thirty as one of the most gripping films I've seen in quite some time. Lead actress Jessica Chastain delivers a monumental performance in a role that we've seen before, but that is made fresh through her emotional intelligence. As for the filmmaking, it's economical to the extent that you forget about the unprecedented access Bigelow was given into the whole thing; be it in leaked details from the CIA or support from the army.

All that surrounds and is included in this film poses questions that we should all care about, but ultimately it is Bigelow who will need to come to terms with her pursuit of veracity, and with the claim of accuracy the film makes.

FULL METAL JACKET: AMERICAN IDEALS VS HUMAN REALITY.

JOSH SENIOR.

Is it really a war when the might of an entire nation supported by endless munitions takes on a small country that is more prone to being ruled than anything else? Is it really a war when a group of six men armed to the teeth shoot dead a woman with an AK-47 in a straw hut defending her children? In all, can the Vietnam 'War' be considered in films as having been depicted accurately?

As always there are two sides to this argument. Some argue that what America did in Vietnam was completely justified and the 'right thing to do' to stop the global rise of Communism. Others believe it's really best summarised as a fly being repeatedly stepped on by a boot. Still, never has one nation done so much to convince the world through the medium of cinema that they won and that they did the best for all involved.

Stanley Kubrick's **Full Metal Jacket** provides us with a realistic perspective of a war fought by two very different sides. The human effects are never far from the eye. The drug culture, prostitution and poverty that American involvement caused are present throughout.

Private Joker is the embodiment of irony, with his peace badge and "Born to Kill" emblazoned on his helmet. As a war correspondent he rarely has to kill or even fight. When he finally kills someone, there's no pride or sense of victory. He realises he's a murderer. His experience of war is survival – refreshing, you might argue, in a world where films often depict American involvement in foreign affairs as righteous.

Nothing depicts the American attitude better than the line: 'If they run they're a VC, if they stand still they're a well-disciplined VC.' It is delivered by a drugged-up, half-naked machine gun operator from the door of a helicopter as he guns down innocent bystanders. This is the truth of Vietnam – America came, they caused havoc and then they left. No war was won and no conflict was averted.

One only has to stand at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC and gaze over the flat black slate to realise that nobody is proud of what happened there. If you want a slice of this truth, Mr Kubrick summarises it perfectly for you in this honest classic.





Events will also take place in collaboration with Museums Sheffield and Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust, and topics touched on in lectures will range from psychiatry and brain imaging to robotics, jewellery and metalwork, genetics, electromagnetism and the Large Hadron Collider. There is far too much going on to list it all here, so visit scienceweeksy.org.uk for a more detailed breakdown of the programme and get your thinking cap on.

Common Thread organises around four events per year, so if you can't make it down to this one, get in touch with coordinator Jess Dawson at jkdawson2707@gmail.com for info about the summer clothing exchange or with any ideas for future collaboration.

To be found down the bottom of the market hall, it is well worth finding beyond the other purveyors of meats for many good reasons, not least the fact that this pork specialist does easily the best value, best quality sausages we've ever eaten. From succulent standard pork to the more adventurous garlic and herb, the quality is astounding and you know exactly what's in them (no horses were harmed in the writing of this). A regular favourite of ours are the amazing tomato variety. Get 'em while you can.

Having recently taken the plunge into 'vaping' in an attempt to prolong our lives, we were also really impressed with the quality and range of electronic smoking devices stocked at Spaceman. With varying flavours and strengths available, binning the baccy has never been easier.



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